

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 6-15, 17, 19, and 25-30 are pending in the application. Claims 18 and 20-24 have been withdrawn, subject to rejoinder upon allowance of the pending claims.

Claim 28 has been rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action alleges that claim 28 contains a negative limitation that does not have any basis in the disclosure.

Applicant respectfully submits, in response, that the lack of a literal recitation of the negative limitation in the specification does not necessarily render the claim unpatentable. MPEP §2173.05(i). The basis for the limitation in claim 28, that the claimed sleeve slot does not extend along an entire length of the sleeve, is clearly shown at least in Fig. 1. Sleeve slot 30 only extends part of the way of sleeve 10. Accordingly, claim 28 is supported in the present specification. Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 6-15, 17, 19, 25-27, 29, and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,421,879 to Gratz et al. ("Gratz") Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the relationship between the various components. Claim 1 now recites a holding bar end extension, and that the holding bar end extension extends in a forward direction away from a user.

In response to the arguments put forth by Applicant in the prior Amendment, the Office Action first states on p. 5 that Gratz shows a holding portion that projects into a clamping area. Applicant respectfully disagrees. On p. 3, the Office Action interprets gripping device 7 of Gratz as reading on the claimed grip element, and fastening area

32 as reading on the claimed clamp. The fastening area 32 in Fig. 10 of Gratz is defined as the space within horn 31. When placed on handlebar 6, area 32 would cover the area of Fig. 10 near where reference numeral 6 is located. Gripping device 7 clearly does not extend into this area, and stops short of this area. Thus, Gratz fails to disclose or suggest the grip element of claim 1.

In response to the comment at the top of p. 6, Applicant was indeed arguing that the gripping device of Gratz does not project into the clamping area. Applicant agrees that this limitation is not recited in claim 1. Rather, claim 1 recites that the holding portion of the grip element does project into the clamping area. As discussed above, this is one of the essential differences between the claimed grip, and that of Gratz.

The Office Action then states that “clamp 25 extends in the forward direction (see Fig. 10)”. Applicant first notes that there is no clamp 25 in Fig. 10, and will assume that the Office Action is referring to horn 31. In addition, as stated in the prior Amendment submitted by Applicant, there is no embodiment of Gratz that shows curved section 25, projection 26 (which the Office Action interprets as reading on the claimed supporting portion), and handlebar horn 31 (which the Office Action interprets as reading on the claimed clamp) together. It is therefore impermissible to combine them, as Gratz itself did not even contemplate this possibility.

Furthermore, even if projection 26 and horn 31 were used together, neither feature is a holding portion that points in a rearward direction toward a user, as required by claim 1. The Office Action’s comment on p. 6 that projection 26 is “capable of being in the rearward direction” is clearly mistaken. Gratz states that curved section 25 is meant to face “forwards in its intended mounting on a bicycle” (col. 9, l. 49-51, emphasis added). Extension 37 of horn 31 does not point forward, as alleged in the Office Action and required in claim 1, but rather points “essentially upwards” (col. 10, l. 57, emphasis added). Accordingly, Gratz fails to disclose or suggest the holding portion, supporting portion, and holding bar end extension of claim 1.

Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over Gratz, as are claims 2, 6 -15, 17, 19, and 25-27, which depend therefrom.

As previously discussed with respect to claim 1, Gratz fails to disclose or suggest a holding portion that projects into a clamping area of a sleeve, let alone at a distance from the sleeve, so that there is a gap between the holding portion and the sleeve in the clamping area. For at least this reason, claim 29 is patentable over Gratz, as is claim 30, which depends therefrom. Gratz also fails to disclose or suggest a holding bar that extends in a direction away from a sleeve that is opposite to a direction in which a grip element extends. This is further support of the patentability of claim 30.

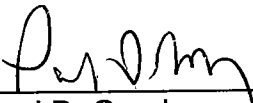
Claim 28 is not listed in the rejection, but the Office Action states on p. 4 that the sleeve slot of Gratz does not extend along an entire length of the sleeve. Applicant respectfully submits that this interpretation is clearly mistaken. On p. 3, the Office Action interprets clamping slot 3 of Gratz as reading on the claimed sleeve slot. As shown in the Figures of Gratz, however, and in particular Fig. 2, clamping slot 3 of Gratz clearly extends the entire length of sleeve 1. The same is true when slot 3 is shown in Figs. 7a-7d with grip 8, or in Fig. 8 with sleeve 1. Gratz thus fails to disclose or suggest the sleeve slot of claim 28, and this is further support of the patentability of claim 28.

Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-15, 17, 19, 25-27, 29, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Gratz be reconsidered and withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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